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NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAM  
Washington, D. C.

*Com - 4*



March 12, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NRP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Approval of Minutes

REFERENCE: ExCom-M-24; January 29, 1971; BYE-12620-71

This memorandum is for your information and is the formal record of approval of ExCom-M-24 subject to insertion of the four attached pages. For your convenience, the changes reflected by these revised pages are indicated below.

Revised Page 2

Addition at the end of the third paragraph: "Plus detailed system design."

Revised Page 8

In line 8, changed "earliest" to "easiest."

In line 20, inserted a period after "that" and deleted the word, "but."

Revised Page 10

Addition at the end of the paragraph: "The DRS problem will continue to be worked by the Air Force to see if they can find a White use which can justify the program."

Revised Page 12

In the third full paragraph, line 2, deleted "and" then added: "Which would permit GAMBIT to be  (deleting the word, )"

EARPOP GAMBIT

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In the same paragraph, penultimate line, inserted a comma after "launch" and at the end of that line, inserted: "NRO operational."

At the end of the last paragraph on the page, changed the last line to read: "Might then reveal the sources of our data."

*F. Robert Naka*

F. Robert Naka  
Secretary  
NRP Executive Committee

Attachments

Revised pages 2, 8, 10,  
and 12 of ExCom-M-24

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We have looked at a number of variations. At the time of the ExCom meeting in November 1970 we were awaiting the results of Phase I; we have high confidence that by the fall of this year we can have a system design to meet the requirements. The reason for meeting today is to decide whether we can proceed as planned.

Dr. McLucas said that he believed we should have a review in July and a decision in November 1971. He did not expect any surprises. The three questions which can be asked today are then

1. Are there any reasons for not proceeding into Phase II?
2. What should the program be in Phase II?
3. How does the decision affect alternative systems?

Dr. McLucas said that he believed we can produce the Film Readout System (FRO) for half the cost of EOI plus the Data Relay Satellite (DRS). These two cost about [ ] over the next five years. FRO would cost about half that. The Tape Storage Camera (TSC) system is not far enough along at present to be able to discuss it. However, it might be in November. He believed that studies and experiments should be continued to determine the system's reliability in space. On the other hand, the FRO technology has been demonstrated and we need only more firm scheduling information plus detailed system design.

Dr. McLucas asked what has changed on EOI in the last one and a half years, rhetorically. First, we had a presentation by Dr. Land and a review by the Fubini Committee; now we have two satellites instead of one as was earlier thought to be adequate. The system has more growth potential. It also has the possibility of replacing one of our present systems. For instance, we are talking about a resolution equaling that of our best system, an [ ] seems to be possible, as does strip photography. He said that, overall, he was impressed with the magnitude of the project.

What then should he recommend? Since he feels that there will be no surprises, he believed that we should continue with the work, proceeding as planned. He agreed with the CIA that three contractors should be funded for the Phase II imaging satellite effort. He believed we should go into Phase II but

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continued that bandwidth was important on EOI and he cannot see how storage could be accomplished. Dr. David was worried that a sensor satellite without storage was the right approach. Mr. Packard reiterated that he did not see how it could be accomplished and Dr. David said that he was not suggesting it could be. Dr. McLucas pointed out that Dr. David was really saying we were "trying to hit a moving target." Mr. Packard said EOI was the easiest way to handle the problem although there were trade-offs. If we were going to pay for near-real-time capability, he believed we ought to go all the way. Dr. David inquired then why the EOI system. Mr. Packard said the question was hard to answer. If we did not need near-real-time readout then we should go to the Film Readout system. Dr. David reiterated that he could not believe the present requirement. Mr. Packard said he could not disagree completely, that he could not debate the need for [ ] return of data. However, the system was within reach so we should try to obtain it. Mr. Helms said he agreed with that position completely. Dr. David asked why the design should be frozen now. Mr. Packard said he did not disagree with that. Dr. David pointed out that Phase II was to freeze the design. Dr. McLucas said Phase II will do more than that. He said the real question is whether to have an option of buying a system. Dr. David felt we wanted more, we wanted an option of what to buy. Dr. McLucas agreed with this point. Mr. Packard went on to say: "Somebody should give us a better answer on what to buy." He agreed with Dr. David that we needed to look at a wider range of options in November and keep things open. Dr. Schlesinger asked if we wanted to wait until November to consider the result or have an interim progress review. Dr. McLucas said we need not wait, we could call for a special meeting when we were ready. Dr. Schlesinger also inquired whether the B version was being abandoned. It was not very appealing but, if it was going to be forgotten, it should be done explicitly. Mr. Packard felt the B version should be abandoned. Dr. Steininger inquired about instructions which he should give to their contractors. Mr. Packard responded that three contractors should be permitted to proceed on the imaging satellite for Phase II but be subject to modifications. Dr. Steininger said he assumed Configuration A was being selected. Mr. Packard replied that we needed to look at all systems. We must have Configurations A and B and any other alternatives. We should not get frozen. Dr. David felt we must keep feeding COMIREX changes to the contractors. Mr. Helms, Mr. Packard, and Dr. McLucas agreed.

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each other. Nevertheless, the Soviets could be developing a capability to shoot down one of our reconnaissance vehicles.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The NRO is convening the Interdepartmental Contingency Planning Committee shortly to produce a policy position. The reason for bringing the subject up to the ExCom was that Mr. Helms, Dr. McLucas, and Dr. Naka had had a conversation on this subject and Mr. Helms had suggested a presentation at the ExCom meeting.

Mr. Packard felt that if the Soviets shot down one of our satellites it would be an act of war. Mr. Helms commented that Dr. Naka was correct in taking the matter up with the ICPC. For the information of ExCom, Mr. Helms said that his opinion is that the GAMBIT vehicle must be [Redacted] because the President would be put in an embarrassing position if the Soviets shot down one of our satellites. We should learn from the Pueblo incident.

Dr. McLucas replied that we must estimate the intent of the Soviets: What should we do if the Soviets only come close? Mr. Helms replied that if they come close that does not create a war. In fact, the Soviets are doing that all the time in other areas of our relations. The abrogation of the Mid-East cease-fire is a good example where the Soviets dared us to take any overt action. Mr. Helms said he did not look forward to going into the Cabinet room immediately after the Soviets had shot down one of our reconnaissance satellites. He would, therefore, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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